

Anna's Story

He said it felt like flying. As I gently pushed the swing, his feet lifted off the ground.

'Higher!' he said, and I gave it another couple of shoves. 'No, more!' he yelled. 'I need to go higher!'

'Are you sure?' We were both laughing now. 'Are you *absolutely* sure?'

'Yes! I want to touch the clouds.'

'Okay. You asked for it,' I said. 'Return trip to the clouds for you my boy!'

In truth, I barely touched the swing but it was enough for him to reconsider his position.

A small voice squeaks out, 'Ooh... that is a bit high isn't it? I think I might get down now.' He was off and moving again before his feet hit the ground.

'Did you see me touch the clouds? Did you?'

'Yeah, I...'. But I was too slow in answering, and he was up the slippery dip ladder - a mile a minute - then through a tunnel and out to swing on half a dozen rings, before stopping briefly for a rest near the roundabout.

Later that night as I put him to bed, I asked Jack what he liked most in the playground. He said, 'Oh, I like it all. I just like mucking around.' We finished the chapter and I kissed him good night.

Jack is my nephew and sometimes he comes to stay with me and John, my husband. With Jack around it reminds me of those moments in life – a child's uncensored energy of love. As an aunt and uncle, you could say that we get all the good bits and it would be different if we had to go through the daily grind, but to tell you the truth we would love that daily grind.

I cannot have a child without assisted fertility. My doctor told me this after my operation. He said, 'Your only chance is to have an egg donation,' and his voice was kind.

'Right,' I said, not really knowing what this meant. Not really knowing that this path would be so full of bends and twists and cul-de-sacs.

'It'll be okay, Anna,' John said. 'It will happen, I am sure of it.'

He is my strength in times of doubt, that man. When the comments come and the remarks are flying, 'But why don't you have children? You would make such great parents,' he deflects them away with a joke and sleight of hand. I say, 'One day soon we will have a child.' And with those most close, I tell them that without a donor egg I cannot have a child. They reassure me and speak hopeful words until the talk turns to other matters.

Occasionally, in those quiet moments of the night, I wonder if I don't see the disappointment in John's eyes. But he speaks only of our love and the child we will have, until I close my eyes in trust.

I come from a family of love and imperfections. My father used to say to me, 'when you have children, you must treat them with respect. You must do your duty to your children'.

My husband and I did not find each other until I was 33. And when we did it was worth the wait. This is what we say laughingly as we lie in each other's arms. We waited for each other, therefore we will wait for our child.

Each day I think of this. My faith is strong that the waiting will be soon over. Today or tomorrow I will open a letter and a woman with strength and conviction will say that she will share her eggs with me. I want to call them something grander than eggs. I want that word to have four syllables and take up more space on the page. Those fears that whisper in my ear in the middle of the night will be turned over to reveal the clear sight of a child and I will sing the song of a swollen belly and tender breasts. And then John and I will sing the murmurings of sleepless nights.

This woman will give to John and I our greatest joy. And each day I will be humbled by her generosity.